

What is claimed is:

1. A garment for applying compression to a limb, said garment comprising:
 - a. a central region having inner and outer surfaces, said central region comprising substantially inelastic material, and lateral regions disposed on opposite sides of the central region;
 - b. a plurality of bands extending from said opposite lateral regions, each of said bands comprising
 - i. a distal region,
 - ii. proximal and distal edges,
 - iii. inner and outer surfaces,
 - iv. a fastener for detachably securing said distal region to a band extending from the opposite lateral region or to the opposite lateral or central region so as to encircle the limb and to draw the first lateral region toward the second longitudinal edge to stretch the central region and thereby provide a tension in the garment that will compress the limb.
2. The garment according to claim 1 wherein the central and lateral regions are biased into a three-dimensional curvature in order to fit the body part.
3. The garment of claim 2 wherein said opposing bands extend substantially perpendicular to a longitudinal axis of said central region, and said proximal and distal edges are substantially parallel to each other.
4. The garment of claim 2 in which wrapping engagement involves juxtaposition of at least a portion of the edges of each band with the edges of one or more opposing bands.
5. The garment of claim 2 in which wrapping engagement involves overlapping engagement of at least a portion of the upper and lower surfaces of opposing bands.

6. The garment of claim 1 wherein each of said bands extend from a lateral region at an angle with respect to a longitudinal axis of the central region, and said angle is independently selected for each band.

5 7. The garment of claim 6 wherein

10 at least one set of opposing bands extends substantially perpendicular to a longitudinal axis of said central region, and said proximal and distal edges are substantially parallel to each other, and in which wrapping engagement involves overlapping engagement of at least a portion of the upper and lower surfaces of opposing bands; and

15 at least one set of opposing bands extends at a non-normal angle to the longitudinal axis of the central region, in which the proximal and distal edges are substantially parallel to each other, and in which wrapping engagement involves overlapping engagement of at least a portion of the upper and lower surfaces of opposing bands.

20 8. The garment of claim 2 wherein a set of opposing bands comprise bands in which recesses are formed in a proximal or distal edge of said band, said recesses positioned for wrapping engagement by juxtaposition of the upper and lower recessional edges of opposing bands.

25 9. The garment of claim 1 for applying compression to a part of the body and having a system for measuring compression wherein said outer surface bears indicia printed thereon wherein measurement of a position of at least one of the indicia relative to a reference position on the outer surface provides a measurement of the stretch of the elastic material.

30 10. The garment of claim 9 further comprising a card having a scale for measuring the separation of the position of the at least one indicia from the reference position and

providing the compression level for the pre-measured circumference of the body part in order to determine the actual compression provided by the garment and adjusting the compression provided by the garment accordingly.

5 11. The garment according to claim 1 further comprising a pocket attached to the garment adjacent at least the distal end of a band, the pocket having a compartment sized to admit at least one finger inserted through an opening in the pocket that faces in a direction substantially away from the distal end of the band, whereby a person can urge the end of the band around the body part by inserting at least one finger through the opening into the 10 compartment of the pocket and pushing or pulling with the at least one finger toward the opposite side of the garment.

12. A method for applying therapeutic compression to a body part for treating a medical disorder which requires compression therapy, comprising the step of applying to said 15 body part a garment, said garment comprising :

a. a central region having inner and outer surfaces, said central region comprising substantially inelastic material, and lateral regions disposed on opposite sides of the central region;

20 b. a plurality of bands extending from said opposite lateral regions, each of said bands comprising

- i. a distal region,
- ii. proximal and distal edges,
- iii. inner and outer surfaces,

25 iv. a fastener for detachably securing said distal region to a band extending from the opposite lateral region or to the opposite lateral or central region so as to encircle the limb and to draw the first lateral region toward the second longitudinal edge to stretch the central region and thereby provide a tension in the garment that 30 will compress the limb.

13. The method of claim 12 wherein said medical disorder is selected from the group consisting of lymphedema, phlebitis, varicose veins, post fracture edema, injury edema, stasis ulcers, obesity, circulatory disorders, and post-burn therapy.

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14. A method for applying therapeutic compression to a body part comprising the step of applying to said body part a garment, said garment comprising :

10 a. measuring a circumference of the body part;

b. placing a therapeutic garment around said body part, said garment comprising

15 i. a central region having inner and outer surfaces, said central region comprising substantially inelastic material, and lateral regions disposed on opposite sides of the central region;

ii. a plurality of bands extending from said opposite lateral regions, each of said bands comprising

i. a distal region,

20 ii. proximal and distal edges,

iii. inner and outer surfaces,

iv. a fastener for detachably securing said distal region to a band extending from the opposite lateral region or to the opposite lateral or central region so as to encircle the limb and to draw the first lateral region toward the second longitudinal edge to stretch the central region and thereby provide a tension in the garment that will compress the limb,

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wherein said inner and/or outer surfaces bear indicia printed thereon wherein measurement of a position of at least one of the indicia relative to a reference position on the outer surface provides a measurement of the stretch of the elastic material;

- c. tensioning the garment to provide compression to the body part; measuring the stretch of the elastic material;
- 5 d. selecting a compression scale appropriate to the measured circumference of the body part; and
- e. reading the compression scale to determine the compression provided to the body part.

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